



Calorie Control Council

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August 16, 2002

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 98N-0359 Program Priorities in the Center for Food
Safety and Applied Nutrition; Request for Comments

The Calorie Control Council ("the Council") provides the following comments on the Food and Drug Administration's request for comments on program priorities in the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) for the fiscal year (FY) 2003. The Council is an international association of manufacturers of low calorie and reduced fat foods and beverages, including the manufacturers and users of a variety of alternative sweeteners, fat replacers and low-calorie bulking agents.

The Council has a true understanding and appreciation for the tremendous amount of time and effort CFSAN devotes to food security and food safety. The Council recognizes the importance of CFSAN's involvement in the various Codex committees and strongly supports its continued participation in these activities. The Council has long stressed the importance of the availability of wide variety of alternative sweeteners and is pleased that the agency recently approved neotame.

The Council, however, has a number of petitions pending before the agency, which would benefit not just industry, but more importantly, the consumer. Specifically, the Council requests that CFSAN include the following in its list of priorities for FY 2003:

- 1) The Council's 1995 Citizen Petition (Docket No. 95P-0099/CP1) requesting that food labeling regulations be amended to permit the use of the term "polyols" in lieu of "sugar alcohols" in the nutrition panel of the food label. As part of this petition, the Council submitted a nationally projectable consumer survey in which 78 percent of those surveyed think the term "sugar alcohol" indicates that a product contains some sugar even when the product is labeled "sugar free." Sixty-nine percent believe the product contains some alcohol. Allowing the use of the term "polyol" would reduce consumer confusion.

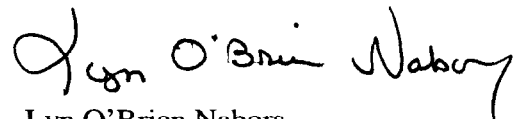
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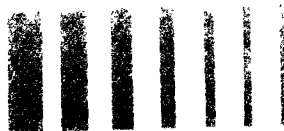
- 2) The Council's 1996 Citizen Petition (Docket 96P-0143/CP1 and related Docket No. 95P-0078/CP1) requesting that food labeling regulations be amended to permit the removal or reduction of ingredients (such as fat and sugar) of standardized foods even when the ingredient is specifically required by the standard. This would allow for a reduction in calories and/or fat to assist in addressing the current obesity epidemic while allowing for more consumer friendly labeling.
- 3) The Council's 1997 Citizen Petition (Docket No. 97P-0056/CP1) requesting that the agency advise the food industry that it may use a caloric value of not more than 2 calories per gram for soluble fiber in food labeling, including Nutrition Facts labeling. This value is scientifically more defensible than the 4 calorie per gram value currently required for soluble fiber and would facilitate further use of soluble fiber in processed foods, thereby providing additional fiber to the American diet. The Center has informed the Council that questions remain about the definition of fiber, which should be resolved by the National Academy of Sciences report on macronutrients, which is scheduled for release later this month (August 28, 2002).

Again, the Council requests that CFSAN act on these long-standing petitions of importance to the consumer and industry.

Respectfully submitted,

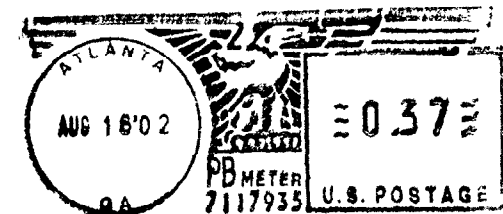
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyn O'Brien Nabors". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lyn" being particularly prominent.

Lyn O'Brien Nabors
Executive Vice President



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